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SOME

REFLECTIONS

On a late

PAMPHLET,

CALLED,

The State of the MORAL
WORLD Considered.

D. W.
76



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Some REFLECTIONS on a late Pamphlet, called, *The State of the Moral World considered.*



THE Design of this Performance is to prove, that there is nothing that can properly be called Sin or Wickedness in the World; That we improve in Experience by our Vices and Faults, but are not to be punished for them (*Pag. 12.*); That we do nothing but what God designed we should do (*Pag. 32.*), every Thing coming to pass according to the Fore-knowledge and Decrees of God, which cuts off Accountableness and positive Punishment (*Pag. 12.*); That there is no ill Design or Intention in our Actions (*Pag. 22.*), the Mind being under an unerring moral Necessity of being determined by that Motive, which seems to carry the most Good with it (*Pag. 13.*), or of acting upon the best Motive we can discover (*Pag. 15.*), &c. And all this together is called, being in a State of Discipline, or training up to Virtue, (*Pag. 32.*). This will appear by transcribing a Paragraph or two.

In *Pag. 12.* having said that the Desire of Happiness is the Principle that Men act from; the Author adds, "But being imperfect Creatures, *i. e.*

" limited in their Power and Faculties, 'tis impossible
 " but that in some Cases they should not discover what
 " is for their real Good and Happiness, and so fall
 " into Vice, by mistaking their true Happiness, and
 " doing that which brings some Degree of Misery
 " upon them; and this Punishment, the natural
 " Consequence of Vice, will be for their After good,
 " by teaching them how to act in the like Cases;
 " thus every new Experience will teach them to
 " pursue their Happiness more steadily. In all this
 " there will be found no other Evil but that of ne-
 " cessary Imperfection in Creatures still improving
 " by Discipline; which is most consistent with the
 " perfect Goodness of the Creator, with every Thing's
 " being perfectly good in its Kind, and with every
 " Thing's coming to pass according to the Divine
 " Fore-knowledge and Decree, which cuts off all
 " Accountableness and positive Punishment." And
 " in *Pag. 8.* having said, "The only Design God could
 " have had in creating such a Variety of subordinate
 " Beings was to communicate to each of them the Hap-
 " piness their several Natures were capable of:" He
 " subjoins, "I am so fully convinced of this, I say,
 " that I cannot agree with them in saying, That by
 " the Abuse of the Faculty Liberty, with which
 " rational Creatures are endued, they have introduced
 " moral Evil, *i. e.* Sin and Wickedness into the
 " World, contrary to God's Intention, and by this
 " subverted the Order and Harmony established
 " in the Creation. Is not this a Contradiction to in-
 " finite Wisdom and Power, who could not fail to
 " contrive and execute the Means of a good Inten-
 " tion?" Again, *Pag. 32. B.* says, "This State
 " then cannot be called a State of Trial, seeing the
 " Deity certainly knows what all his Creatures will
 " do, they doing no other Thing than what he de-
 " signed they should do." *A.* answers, "I have
 " called it a State of Discipline to train us up to
 " Virtue, which you see it is."

Here



Here the Divine Prescience, the Decrees, and human Liberty are brought in, *Things* of a difficult and dangerous Discussion; The Conclusions are pretty *large* and weighty, the Reasons leading to them a little *short*; and in some Points asserted Experience and Observation seem to be on the other Side. This last Particular I beg Leave to notice, and in as few Words as may be. The Prescience and Decrees are above *my Reach*; and they should be touched upon, even by the greatest Hands, with much Caution: Of Liberty we may venture to speak more freely, as being a Power belonging to our selves.

And, *First*, From this Scheme thus laid down (as in *Page 12.*) it would follow, that Men would never fall into the same Vice again, at least not after their having once discovered that it was Vice; for *Ignorance* is made the Reason, why they fall into Vice; and it is affirmed, that every new Experience will *teach* them how to pursue their Happiness more steadily, or how to act in like Cases afterwards: And upon this Account it is concluded, that we are Creatures still improving by Discipline, not accountable for our Actions, nor liable to any positive Punishment. But what shall we say to the particular Case, where Men, by repeated Acts of Vice, contract Habits of it, instead of being taught and made wiser; and at length go out of the World hardened? It is needless to go far back in History to find out such as have degenerated into dreadful Monsters. According to the Reasoning here, these should be the *best* Men, having had most Experiences. Or is it that they were ignorant all the while that they acted a wicked Part? How many do we see that cry out against such and such Crimes, and yet are found out afterward to be guilty of them themselves? Suppose a Set of Gentlemen of easy Fortunes and liberal Education, should conspire to betray the Trust reposed in them, and ruin Numbers of innocent Persons, taking all the Caution possible not to be detected; Could such be
ignorant

ignorant that this was a Piece of horrid Villany? This is an Age wherein the Theory of Morality, at least, is perfectly understood; therefore, according to this Doctrine, it should be most virtuous; for *Virtue* and moral Practice would always be in Proportion to Knowledge. Notice the Import of the Words,—“But being limited Creatures, it is impossible; but that in *some Cases* they should not discover, &c.” That is, I think, in all Cases where they can discover, Men act virtuously. How partial a Representation this! Doth not Drunkenness, to give a common Instance, carry its Punishments, and its fatal Experiences along with it? Yet of what do we contract stronger or more incorrigible Habits? It is certainly something *else* than the Want of Knowledge and Experience that makes us become vicious, and much more that makes us continue so: Otherwise in polite and populous Places, Vice should be *rarer*, and more Horror shewn at it, than in the remote and barbarous Parts of the Country. Or, *Lastly*, is this that I have named, *viz.* That Men by repeated Acts of Vice contract Habits of it, instead of being reformed and taught how to shun it in like Cases afterward; is this, I say, a particular Case? Or is it not rather generally true? Who reforms and grows better from Experience and more Knowledge, a few only excepted, who are looked upon as either *whimsical* or *peevish*? The Supposition then, upon which this State of Discipline is in a *great Measure* raised, seems noways true, as far as we know Men; and I think the Author should have noticed it in laying his Scheme.

It will perhaps be said, “That this Life is not the State of improving by Discipline; and that after Death is the Time we begin to get our Knowledge and Experience of what is for our Happiness.” But neither would this be true; as was observed just now, we *know better* than we *practise* even here: And besides, it would alter the whole Scheme.

The

The main Design is to shew, that Things are as well here as they can be, so that we cannot be called to an Account. " In all this, says the Writer, there " will be found no other Evil, but that of necessary Imperfection in Creatures still improving by " Discipline." And more explicitly afterwards, (*page 23.*) " For (says he) if Things are wrong in " this State, it is a shrewd Presumption that they " will be *always* so, else they must say that he is " another Sort of Governor who ruleth in the next " State, than he who governeth in this. Harmony, " Order and Design must be begun here, else we " can never expect that they will be improved in " the other World. So that upon this Scheme where " every Thing is as good as can be, &c. This Hypothesis takes in particularly our present Stage of Existence, where Things are as good *as can be*, and the Manner of Improvement is asserted to be, by teaching us how to act in *like Cases* afterward.

But here I think, a new Difficulty will appear to many, how such a State of Discipline can be carried on into the other World. Or shall we be in Hazard of acting fraudulently, oppressively; of Cruelty, Blood shed, &c. *there*, in case we have not got Knowledge and Experience enough of these Things *here*? or shall we be *vitious to Eternity*; still acting something wicked and sinful, that we may still be in a State of Discipline, always improving in Virtue and Knowledge from our Vices, or from the Punishment they bring along with them? See again the Scheme in *page 12.* This is certainly the State of Discipline expressly described here. The Author should have been a little more precise in determining where such a State of Discipline will *end*, or if it will end: for as the *improving* Part of it doth not seem to agree to the *present* State, the *sinning* Part of it seems not to agree to the *Future*. And yet he says *page 22.* That all Orders of subordinate Beings will be going on while they exist, by a
State

State of Discipline and Experience to attain more and more Knowledge to pursue Happiness; and that it seems altogether inconsistent with the Perfections of the Creator to annihilate his Works. If then our whole *endless* Existence is a State of such Discipline, and of Experience so acquired, it would seem that the more Sin we commit; we shall have the more Knowledge to pursue Virtue; *and the Ways of doing ill are inexhaustible*: Or we shall at length be out of this State of Discipline; having got thro' the infinitely many Ways of doing Wrong. This, it is owned, would be a strange Way of becoming good by *infinite Transgression*: And yet what he lays down seems to lead directly to it. Another Author of late pretended to shew the *Benefits and Advantages* arising from several Sorts of Vices: But never any Body before endeavoured to carry the *Usefulness* of sinning so high. What a Source of Encouragement for sinning on *here*; in order to become the better for it *hereafter*, by acquiring Knowledge and Happiness! Men that have sinned lustily, as *Caligula, Nero, &c.* bid fair to be the brightest Spirits; they got the Start in this Method of Improvement in Virtue. I do not apprehend how this Doctrine can do much good to Mankind in their present State.

As to what is said; that there is no evil Intention in Nature, by which is meant, whatever Mischief a Man may do to others, he hath no evil Intention against them, but only a Design to pursue his own Happiness, tho' in a mistaken Way, *page 22, 23*; It should be well considered whether this *philosophical Talk* is perfectly agreeable to matter of Fact, and every Thing that has happened in the World; or how, notwithstanding of such a specious Flourish, one will account for Phenomena like these. A Man burns a City in a Jest, or for the Diversion of the Sight, and to see if it answers the poetical Description of a City in Flames. A Man wishes that those
whom

whom he should *protect* and *defend*, had but one common Neck, that it might be cut asunder at one Blow. A Man invites a whole Nation to celebrate his Marriage, and *without Provocation* endeavours to cut them all to Pieces, &c. The Truth is, Men are capable to arrive to such a Height of Wickedness, as to be mischievous out of Wantonness and Gaity of Heart. Let the Writer notice the following Account of one of the Men here spoken of.

“ He used (says the Historian) openly to lament
 “ the Condition of his Times, that they were not
 “ rendered remarkable by some publick Calamities:
 “ Complaining that *Augustus's* Reign was made
 “ memorable by the *Varian* Slaughter, and *Tiberius*
 “ by the Fall of the Theatre at *Fidenæ*; but
 “ that the Prosperity of his own would sink his
 “ Name in Oblivion. Therefore he wished for a
 “ Destruction of Armies, a Famine, a Pestilence,
 “ and for terrible Fires, and Gapings of the Earth.
 “ In his Diversions and Entertainments for unbending his Mind, the same Barbarity appeared thro’
 “ all his Words and Actions. Persons were often
 “ examined by Torture before his Face, as he was
 “ at *Dinner*; or *Revelling*, &c. Or if it should be contended that Men proposed to themselves Pleasure from these monstrous and unnatural Crimes; yet is it not the *Perfection* of Wickedness and *evil Intention* to take Pleasure in the Havock of the Species, in treating them as the Boys did *the Frogs* in the Fable? It is the genuine Character of a Devil to take Pleasure in gratuitous Mischief. What can it be ascribed to, when a Man hath it in his Wishes and Endeavours to destroy all the Books and all the Learning among Men? Let the *Spring* of such a Desire be condescended on, according to the Principles here laid down. This seems neither to afford him Pleasure in Body or Mind, unless it be that of a Fury; or *Caco-Demon*.

We see even in Children, who are ill educated, a Desire of doing Mischief, if not for Mischief's sake, *at least* for Sport and Diversion; of exercising little Cruelties and Barbarities upon such Creatures as fall in their Power; of marring and spoiling every Thing, without their being the *better* for it in any Sense or Respect: What Malice and Blood-thirstiness might not this *improve* to, when they come to be Men, if they happen to be of *high Station*, and are suffered to go on? Or should we wait till they are improved in Knowledge and Virtue by these early Sallies? Most Men would think a proportioned Correction would be very necessary in such Cases: Altho' according to this Scheme, taken in its full Extent, they should be allowed to get Knowledge and Improvement this Way. What takes away Punishment in the *greater* Case, will take it away in the less, and therefore *universally*, if the Reasoning here is good. If the new Form of moral Necessity (of which afterward) holds, it must hold equally in *all* Ages, *from the Nature of it*; and if we do nothing but what God designs we should do, this is equally applicable to *Childhood* and *riper Years*, unless at our *first* setting out we are not worth the while of God's common Providence. From this short, accidental View of *Childhood* and *Education*, we may see to what it is owing that there is not more evil Desire, and evil Affection in Nature (as the Writer chuses to express it) and that, if our Actions and Inclinations did not get a right Bent and Direction early, there would be evil Intention enough in our Nature; nor are Things managed so well, that there are not still *too many* Examples to shew the Truth of this; and that, if this Want of *Culture* and *setting right* were universal, all human Affairs behoved soon to go to Confusion. The Author says, *Page 14*. "The Creature
 " does not, you know, give itself any Faculties or
 " Inclinations, but all is given it by the Creator,
 " who, as he is perfectly good, could not give it
 " any

"any ill ones." I must be forgiven to think he makes a very wrong Use of this, to *excuse* us where we are *not* excuseable. We can not give ourselves any Faculties, but we may *misapply* those given us: And there is nothing more certain than that we may pervert and corrupt our Inclinations, or even set them right again, (though this is not so easy after contrary Habits contracted, it being much difficulter to *make* straight, than to *keep* straight;) and all this by the *pretendedly* impossible Power, *Liberty*. But to return to *no evil Intention in Nature*, would it be any Alleviation of the Mischiefs that would ensue, because through early Practice and long Custom they had *habituated* themselves to take a perverse Pleasure in *adult* and *manly* Cruelty? Would this philosophical Saying, "Tho' there may be Vice in *Action*, there is none in *Intention*," cure all; or this, every one pursues his own Good, tho' in a mistaken Way? Or is it not the Height of Wickedness, of positive Vice, to bring ourselves to take Pleasure in the Pain of others, with no other Advantage, save that of satisfying a precontracted vitious Habit? If this be *enough*, there is nothing that we may not be *innocently* guilty of, if we can bring ourselves to take a degenerate Pleasure in it. Nero might have pretended that the Pursuit of *his* Happiness lay in burning *Rome*, or *Caracalla*, that *his* consisted in massacring the *Parthians*, who had credulously yielded to his pressing Invitations to a Marriage Solemnity.

From all this it appears, that the Position of the worst Actions having no evil Intention, abuses the World most grossly, under Pretence of a new, *finer* philosophical Notion; for it is the Intention that gives the Action, not only the *Denomination*, but the *Nature* of fraudulent, cruel, barbarous: And hence it is that the Law chiefly regards the *animus*. The most hardened *Russian* would *blush* to have Recourse to this *new* Topick; or plead the Justice and Fairness of his Intentions, when he murdered the

unwary Traveller for the Sake of his Money, rather than maintain himself by honest Industry : And are not *Philosophers* ashamed to excuse Men and Beasts of Prey, upon the *same* Account ? In short, that the most immoral Actions have *no evil Intention*, pulls up the Roots of Morality, takes away the Distinction betwixt Just and Unjust, Right and Wrong, Good and Evil ; and opens a Door to all Violence and *endless* Confusions.

It is difficult I think to pursue a false Scheme consistently. Thus, tho' it is asserted in this, that there is no moral Evil, no Sin or Wickedness in the World (*Page* 8, 10, 12.) ; yet in *Page* 2. of the Letter it is complained that the greatest Confusions and bloodiest Massacres have arisen from certain Opinions. This indeed is the popular Cry of late ; but this Man should have been aware how he joined in it ; for if there is no real Evil or Immorality in the World, nothing but what is *most consistent* with the Good and Improvement of Mankind, and their becoming wiser and better ; or if no Creature does any Thing but what God designed it should do (*Page* 32.) it will follow that it is perfectly needless to seek to alter the Opinions of other Men (not to notice in this Place, that on his Principles it is impossible to effect it ;) and that these Massacres and Confusions are *no ill Things*, but really for the Good and Improvement—of those *perhaps* who perpetrate them, or *surely* of those on whom they are perpetrated ; and that no former Opinions can have an ill Consequence, nor new ones a better ; every Thing taking that Issue that God designed it should. How can any Thing be an abominable Source, that is, I think, a Source of abominable Actions, on such Principles first laid down ? *

In

* The Expression is, "From this most abominable Source have arisen the greatest Confusions, and bloodiest Massacres." I think one

In a Word, a Man who undertakes the Defence of this State of Unaccountableness, should not complain or quarrel with the Condition of the Moral World. He precludes himself, by the very Nature of what he advances, from *medling* with Opinions and Practices; or rather, if he believes himself, when he says, Men do no other Thing than what God designed they should do, he seems to *oppose* these Designs, and *fight against* the Creator; unless he says God designed *all* the Contrariety among Men that *ever was*, or *will be*: And then they may go together by the Ears, and worry one another *with Authority*: How one can extricate himself out of such a Labyrinth is not easy to be conceived. And universally, all Writers for Impunity are guilty of this Inconsistency, when they *complain*, and exaggerate certain Things that have happened; as if any Thing could be *wrong*, if nothing needs to be redressed. It cannot be other than absurd to hear the same Man an *Advocate* for Impunity, and yet an *Accuser* of Men's Actions. In fine, the present Point comes to this Dilemma, either these Persecutions, Massacres and Confusions are *wicked*; contrary to the Scheme: Or, when he represents them as such, he is contrary to himself. The Actors of such Tragedies are not accountable Creatures, nor deserve Punishment; they are in the Way of Improvement, and pursuing the *Means* of it: There-

one may observe in this Place, that the Scheme of moral Necessity which the Writer goes upon, loads God with all the *Abominations* of human Actions as much as another Scheme of older Date. That was for *exorbitant Pains*. and this for *remiss Impunity*: But perhaps the Patrons of the first will see their Mistakes best in the Consequences of the second; as it is ordinary to see our own Faults on our *Neighbour's* Back. The impartial will consider whether moral Motives, as explained and applied of late, are not the *Engines* of absolute Decrees, or a philosophical Attempt, as it were, to shew the *formal Manner* how these Decrees are brought to pass. This will be better understood a little below.

Therefore he must have forgot that he has no Ground of Complaint; for he says after the Words cited, *Page 14.* That besides God's giving Men those Inclinations and Faculties which they have, he orders all their external Circumstances whatsoever as he sees best; and therefore whatever comes to pass can be no other than what his infinite Goodness designed, and therefore *not* evil or wicked.

A Word farther with Respect to this. How come human Laws to *inflict* Punishments, *cut* off Limbs, *take* Lives, for Mens improving themselves in Virtue and Knowledge by such Actions as God designed they should do? When a Rogue is hang'd, all his future Advancement in Perfection is *uncharitably* cut short, at least here. Nothing could be more commendable than for Men in *their* Government to imitate God in *his* Government of the World, who *never* punishes. If it should be said, this universal Impunity would *subvert* all Society; would not that be to own, that the Method *here* defended of Improvement in Virtue and Perfection is inconsistent with the Preservation of Society? And if it be a *Reflection* on the Government of the Deity that their should be a *Necessity* for Punishment in it, doth this Scheme *remove* that Reflection, when it is confessed, that the Necessity *still* remains, or Society would be at an End? This Position then of our not being accountable Creatures, *arraigns* humane Laws, or *else* it doth not conclude: For, as was said before, whatever takes away the Necessity of Punishment in the *weightier* Case, will take it away in Things of *less* Moment; and therefore *universally*. Take all the Reasons here assigned for Impunity in an *After-state*, and if they are good, they are as conclusively applied to the *present*.—Men never sin but through Mistake and Ignorance: This tends to their Reformation: They are taught by one Slip how to act better when the like Case returns again: They do nothing but
what

what God designs they should do: What they do is not evil or wicked: They will be going on in this Discipline and Improvement to Eternity.—In all this why should *Men* pervert and change the Ways of *God*? Or why should his Creatures be more accountable to their *Fellow-creatures*, than to *himself*? Would not this Doctrine, if received, have a Tendency to make Men grumble, and *strike out* against being subjected to any human Government? Tell them that they are to have *Impunity* hereafter, let their Actions be what they will; *say* that those Actions are not ill, but designed by God, the Means of becoming perfecter in Virtue; and they will think it hard to have the *Gallows* for them *here*. And this Way again all must end in Confusion. So far are these Principles from reconciling Man to Man, as is pretended. (See the Letter *Page 2.*) It may be observed farther, I think, that none of the *other* Advocates for Impunity have adverted to the Consequences of their own Tenets in *this* Respect of human Punishments; for these take equally away the Force of all human Laws: And it is remarkable that while these Principles *deny* the *Reasonableness* of Punishments, they naturally tend to *increase* the *Necessity* of *both* Sorts, human and Divine. Such Repugnancy is interwoven in them! And though the Authors had observed this, they would never reconcile it otherwise than by recurring to down right Anarchy and *Atheism*. But to return.

If by this Scheme Things must end in Confusion here, how can it reconcile us to the Government of God *himself*, or give us more noble Notions of his Wisdom and Goodness? Though this is the main Thing pretended, (see the Letter *ibid.*) for on the Supposition of Punishment, God is treated with *Names*, somewhat cavalierly. We expect *no* Redress for being innocently oppressed, massacred; or Oppressors are *not* accountable; their Actions not wicked; *rather* perfectly consistent with the Designs
and

and Decrees of God. Is it, let me ask, *Tyranny* to punish the Oppressor; and *not Tyranny* not to restrain the Oppression? To let the Innocent groan on? What Thoughts of the Deity doth this suggest! He will not punish *himself*—the guilty too: But hath his *Torturers* of the Innocent, perfectly agreeable to his Designs!—It doth not seem so easy a Thing to *mend* the Constitution of the moral World, as one would *lightly* imagine.

By the Way we may, I think, make an Observation, That whatever is subversive of Society here can *never* be God's Method of governing the World: For we are *here* by his Appointment and placing, and make a *Part* of that Government; and it can not be inconsistent or destructive of itself.

There is another Thing assumed as certain in this Scheme, which yet seems contrary to Observation and Experience in this Life, *viz.* That Misery, or Punishment, is the *natural Consequence* of all Vices in it (see Page 12 and 25.); for if this is *not* true, and in *so far* as it is not true, it takes away the *very* Foundation of this State of Discipline: And it is so far from being true, that some Men, *secure* by their ill got Power, rather *triumph* in their Villainy, and get their Vices *dignified* with honourable Names. It is long since the Satirist observed that while a *little Rogue* gets a *Halter* for his Crimes, the *grand Villain* has his rewarded with a *Diadem*. There are but few Men of a Sense quick enough to be uneasy in their Minds upon the Commission of Vice; that requires Improvement and *Habits* of Virtue: In others, when their Wickedness is attended with Success, there is no Misery consequent here; they enjoy Health, Ease, Affluence; *nay* and often Reputation; or if not, they *neglect* it. This Consideration should have come into *ones* Mind, I think, who was laying down *such* Principles. And the contrary to this seems also to offer itself to his Observation; *to wit*, that *Virtue* often bears the Pains due to *Vice*,
and

and the Innocent *suffer* for the Guilty. And this is so true, and Instances so remarkable, that Men *seeing no Redress* here, and *supposing* there was no After-state in which to be redressed, have *denied* the Being of a God altogether. This was the *first* Rise of Atheism. Now are we not very ill-conditioned and *hard* to please? If God is supposed to punish *any* Thing, how flagitious so ever, he is *stiled* a capricious, arbitrary Being, a Tyrant, the Object of our Fear and Hatred, in so much that there is scarce a late Book on this Subject that wants these Names: And if he is supposed *not* to punish, he is denied to be any Thing but a Name.

This is the Account *this Writer* gives of the State of the moral World, which, as it appears to me, is neither consistent in itself, or conform to Experience, and the Actions commonly to be observed among Men. Hence I think he is *in the wrong* when he draws the following Inference from it, *Page 23*. "After all" (says *B.*) I think by this View of Things, one of the *principal* Arguments for a future State is *entirely* cut off, *viz.* that brought from the perverted Order of Things here; Vice often flourishing, and Virtue falling into Distress, which infers a *future* State in which all Things shall be set to Rights, by punishing Vice and rewarding Virtue." To this *A.* answers. "Was it true that the Order of Things is perverted here, this Argument drawn from it in Proof of a future State, in which all Things are to be set to rights proveth *rather* the contrary. For if Things are wrong in this State, it is a *shrewd Presumption* that they must be *always* so," &c.—The present distempered State of the moral World is too manifest to be denied; or dissembled; so that when a Man's projected Scheme depends on its being otherways, it is strange that should not *abate* of its Confidence of it. What? Will the Writer say *in earnest* that Men *never act* against their Knowledge and Reason? Or that they always
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act upon the *best Reason* they can discover (Page 15.)? Suppose one of his Servants, in whom he put Confidence, should with all the Semblance of *Honesty*, and all the Cunning of *Roguery*, steal and embezzle what was committed to his Trust, till he had well nigh ruined his Affairs; would he *appologize* for this good Man with the Philosophy of *Unaccountableness*? Or rather would he not *frankly* give his Philosophy the Lie in his Practice? And yet it must hold here, or no where. What excuses in the *weightiest* Matters among Men, must be a *full* Vindication in *Trifles*, as was said above. It is really a pitiful Thing to have our Philosophy disproved from every common Affair in Life: And certainly all the Affairs in Life must take a *new*, and hitherto unknown Turn, if this Scheme is good. In short, when a Man enquires fairly into moral Actions, as they stand recorded in History, or are presently practised, almost every Particular is *contrary* to what he represents it. This is a shrewd Presumption indeed of something; but does *no Manner* of Harm to the Argument for a future State, said to be entirely cut off. The *Insinuation* that if Things were wrong here, they should always be so, is equal to an *absolute Affirmation* without any Condition, they are so undeniably wrong: However it is an unsupported Affirmation; For it is infinitely *more* necessary that the perverted State of Morality should be rectified, than that Day should succeed Night: The *eternal* Perfections of the Deity require the one, and the other is but an *arbitrary* Institution. He is much too positive and rash in the following Page, when he repeats thus, "Upon this Scheme, I say, a future State can only be built." The Immortality of the Soul is the weightiest Truth within the *Compass* of human Enquiry, by as much as an endless Duration is more than that of 60 or 70 Years; weightier than even *that* of the Existence of the Deity itself, since if all is extinguished at once, we cannot have extream much Concern whether there is

a God, or not; we would soon be *incapable* of his Kindness, or could at any Time put ourselves *beyond* the Reach of his Power. And for a Man to decide so over-bearingly in this *Sum* and *Chief* of all Enquiries, to say it can only be built upon an idle and inconsistent Fancy of his own, in Opposition to a Proof agreeable to the Sense of all Mankind, and to Reason itself, is any Thing rather than *Sobriety*, and *Caution* of Enquiry.

I know not if these Considerations will be of Weight enough to prevent the compleat Treatise he says he designs on this Scheme: However, in what follows I shall endeavour at something more decisive; and to *take away*, if possible, the fundamental Pretences for scepticizing in natural Religion and Morality.





A short Account of the Spring of
human Liberty; this necessary to
rational Beings as rational;
whence Accountableness.

IN the foregoing Scheme, the State of Discipline and Improvement, that is of *falling into Vice* (*pag. 12.*) and being punished for it, (*pag. 31.*) and thence *reforming*, is supposed to be carried on through *all Eternity*.—"Who by Experience and Discipline (says he *pag. 22.* will be going on while they exist, " and it seems altogether inconsistent with the Perfections of the Creator to annihilate his Works, &c." And *pag. 31.*—"By all this Persecutors and Oppressors will be taught and punished for their Errors, " besides when they shall come to the Knowledge of their Error, which they will certainly do sooner or " *later* in this or *another* State, it will be Matter of " uneasy Reflection and Remorse to them, for occasioning so much Misery to others, &c." Now besides the Inconsistencies already observed, and not to mention that in this last cited place, he seems to join in the Symptoms and Consequences of a State of *Probation* to his State of Discipline; there is an other fundamental Mistake, I suppose, runs through the whole, which renders it irreconcilable to it self upon a *new* Score; Namely, as he joins in Unaccountableness and Improveableness in the same Scheme. For we cannot be improveable but as we are *endued* with *Liberty*, and then we must be accountable for the same Reason: And contrarily, if we are not accountable, it must be because we are under Necessity, and that makes us al-

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so unimproveable. So that Unaccountableness and Improveableness proceeding from *opposite* and *inconsistent* Reasons, can never be competent to the same Beings without a Repugnancy. And accordingly, while he would shew us *not* accountable, he supposes we can do nothing of our selves, but that we act as we are necessarily and unerringly *determined*: And while he would make us improveable Creatures *again*, he *nimbly* supposes that Impediment taken off, and that we have a native Power of our own, which we can upon Occasion exert. And any one will see that it is impossible to free the Nature of his Undertaking from this Contradiction.

This *last* Supposition of his, *viz.* that the Soul has a native Power of her own, will be plain if we consider the Force of his Expressions in that *pag.* 12. where he lays down his Scheme.—“And this Punishment, the natural Consequence of Vice, will be for their after Good, by *teaching* them how to act in like Cases; thus every new *Experience* will *teach* them to pursue their Happiness more *steadily*.”—What means Experience, Teachableness, pursuing more or less steadily, if not applied to free Beings? Necessary Agents (if that were proper) may be *acted, wrought, or moved*, but cannot be taught so again.—“But being limited in their *Power* and *Faculties*, 'tis impossible but that in some Cases they should not discover, &c.”—Here is plainly intimated an Exertion of their *own Power* so far as it reaches. Nothing can be expressed more in the Terms of Liberty and Self-determination. I might also mention his Definition of Liberty to this Purpose, but of that below. Nor is his *other* Supposition, to wit, that we can do nothing of our selves, but as we are *necessarily* and *unerringly* determined, less plain; if we advert what Power of Action he allows the Soul to have, which is just this much to be determined by the *greatest* moral Motive which is offered to her, and without which she would not act at all, offered (I say, and beg it may be noticed)

ed) by *something* from without; for if she her self could search out for a Motive, or a Prepollency of Motive, to determine her to act, it is clear she acts *already*; or wills, directs, determines in this Search; —and all without a determination. For this see *pag.* 13. where *B.* says.—“And you likewise intimate that every Action of moral Agents comes to pass by a moral Necessity, as unerringly as any Effect in Nature, according to the *Divine Decree*, else there would be no *Foundation* for Prescience.” *A.* answers, “The Difference between the Exertion of the Self-motive Faculty, and the Wills moving the Body to Action, I do not understand: And that any Thing should move the Body or Matter, an inert Thing, but the Will or Mind is impossible.” [Follows what I would have considered.] “And further, the Mind cannot move the Body to Action, without an Inclination or Disposition to move to one Action rather than another, as she is determined by the greatest Motive, or that Motive that seems to carry the most Good with it. Whether Prescience can be built on any Thing *besides this moral Necessity*, I leave you to explain.” And upon this Account he says in the following Page, That Prescience is the Cause of the moral Action; and in the preceeding Page, that *every Thing* comes to pass according to the Divine Fore-knowledge and Decree, which he joins together as *Causes* of taking away all Accountableness and positive Punishment. And in *pag.* 16. he says, If the Mind were not excited to Action by some Inclination or Affection, she would not act at all, being perfectly indifferent to all Action; and the Desire of Happiness being her inseparable Principle, she will *always* be necessarily determined to act by the prepollent Motive. From which it will follow again, that in Case of an Equipollency, she must be perfectly indetermined, indifferent, and therefore *inert*; and the same is to be said in Cases where she has no Motive: For then neither *Thought* nor external *Motion* will

will ensue; Thought and Motion being *equally* Action. And with Respect to Thought, or *willing* it self, more explicitly at the Foot of *pag.* 15. he says, "But" then we are also conscious, that we can not will otherwise *in any one Case*, but as we are determined by the prevailing Motive, or that Motive which we at present think will be most for our Good.

If then Men were under the unerring moral Necessity of being determined by the Motive that seemed to carry most Good with it; it does not appear that ever they should have Occasion for *Remorse* or *uneasy Reflection*, as is said in that 32. *pag.* and as the Scheme supposes; or of repenting of any Thing that ever they had done. Their whole Life, from the Beginning to the End, would be a *Series* of Actions resulting from a Chain of unerring and *inevitable* Determinations, which they could not make better or worse, and which, as it was not in their Power to alter, they could have no Reason to be sorry for.—Let this once be considered.—And further, were they to live it over again in the same Circumstances, a Thousand, nay Ten thousand Times, it would still be the same Thing: Nor could they take Warning in future Cases, though ever so much alike, unless they were *unerringly* and *necessarily determined* to this also. In that Scheme where the Mind is made impotent to exert an Act of itself, and without being unerringly determined by *something else*, it is needless to speak of Improvement, taking Warning, or becoming wiser and better: It could not so much as reflect on former Miscarriages, or turn its View to them, without being unerringly determined still. If it could do but this much, their whole Scheme would fall to the Ground. So rigorous must this Necessity be, and so delicately tender are the Principles these Gentlemen go upon! For (let it be noticed) if it could exert but *any one* Act freely, and without a Motive, it would shew a Power, upon the Denial of which their whole Hypothesis is built. It might exert a second, and a third Act, or any
Number

Number of Acts, and go far enough out of the *Reach* of their Necessity. They are not aware that, upon their Principles, there must be a determining Motive for *every Thing* that the Mind does; for every *voluntary* Change of Thought or Idea, passing by the Impropriety of applying *Voluntariness* in this Hypothesis. If there is not, the Mind may leave the Consideration of the determining Motive, and turn to the Consideration of something else; because it is not *unerringly* determined: And if there is, this unerring Necessity must *run through all*, and becomes *universal* as to Limits, and as *irresistible* as absolute Fate. So that upon this Scheme of moral-motive Necessity, taken in its genuine Extent, and within less Bounds than which it *cannot consist*, by what I have said just now; upon this Scheme I say, thinking would be *impossible*, and there could be nothing in the Mind but a necessary *Train* of *mechanical, stupid* Perception, one single Idea remaining there, till displaced by another offered *ab extra*, come whence it will; since the Mind had no Power of it self to turn to the Consideration of any Thing absent, or bring it in View. In a Word, this new Necessity leaves the Mind as *inert a Thing* as Matter itself, with the Addition only of a *passive Perceptivity* or Sense; just (to use a Comparison in this absurd Case) like a Looking-Glass that reflects the Images of Objects, as these are offered to it, but can not move, vary or dispose them from the Order it receives them in. And from what is said already, let one consider with himself, whether it was *possible* in the *Nature* of Things, for God to make thinking Beings, such as we Men are, other than *free Beings*: I mean, endued with the Liberty and spontaneous Power of Thought, in Opposition to the being determined in every Transition and Change of Idea, by moral Motives offered *ab extra* (or even sought for internally, of which more immediately), and this much is enough to constitute Liberty of the Actions of the Mind, for Thought is the genuine Action of the Mind. And
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in the mean Time, it seems altogether improper to speak of a State of Discipline in these Circumstances, or of getting Improvement and Experience from our former Mistakes. That is the Language of another Philosophy, only *borrowed* and *misapplied* here; and supposes that Power of acting without a Motive (*i. e.* in different Cases) which I am contending for. Whence it appears that this Scheme of Discipline and Unaccountableness is made up of two contrary and inconsistent Parts, *Fate* and *Freedom*, as was asserted.

Before we go further, it is fit to observe, that the Question is not here, whether ever we are determined by moral Motives or not? Nobody denies that we are *sometimes*? and if we were *oftner* thus determined, it would be the better: But the Question is, whether this Determination *reigns throughout*, so that the Mind cannot exert an Act of it self, without such Determination? And also as to the *Manner* of it, whether it is irresistible, or unerring, as in Consequence of a Decree? For unless it is thus irresistible, their Conclusion still *haults*, and their Necessity will be a *staggering*, uncertain Thing, contrary to the Nature of Necessity. And the Point being thus limited, the Argument is brought into narrow Bounds. For either the Mind *can* change the Object of its Perception freely; Or it *can not*. If it can, this Power may be repeated again and again; and the whole Scheme falls to Pieces: If it cannot, then we are neither accountable nor improveable, and all the Consequences I just now named will follow, and these moral Motives are thus, as it were, certain *invisible* or ideal *Engines* to *work* the Mind withal, like a Piece of Mechanism; the *Machinery* (it I may so say) of Fate or absolute Decrees; a Play of Words to make us fancy that all the Appearances we observe about our Minds are reconcileable to inevitable Destiny: And that I think, which has made this take the more, is the very *Sound* of the Words; *Moral Motives*, which looks as if there were something very

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moral

moral in the Scheme, or that favoured human Liberty; though this is a poor, childish Deceit. Moral Motives import, that the Mind has *Election*; and all Election supposes Freedom and *Indifference* before-hand, to chuse aright: But if the *Dominion* of these little, imaginary Engines is supposed *universal*, the Mind is *constantly* in Fetters, with the *Epithet* and *Badge* still of Liberty, and this *two-edged* Sophism, which turns on the Sound of a Word, *Leger-de-main-like*, shows you the Mind upon this Side *free*, and upon that *bound* in Irons, as the Mountebank (if I may be allowed to use that Term) pleases to turn it. When he would shew you the Mind free, he tells you the Advantage of being determined by moral Motives: But when he would let you see it under Necessity again, he tells you it cannot *so much as will*, without a prevailing Motive to determine *necessarily, unerringly*; so that its *chusing* is the Man at the Back of the Curtain *moving the Puppet*. For both these see Page 15. and the Note to it.

To come a little nearer then, in order to shew that we have a Power to act in Cases indifferent; That this Power is *absolutely necessary* to our being determined by moral Motives; That the Origine of moral Evil is *owing* to the Abuse of it, or extending it too far, and not adhibiting the Consideration of moral Motives in weighty Cases; and, if possible, to say something to satisfy the great sceptical Question, How came an infinitely perfect and good God to make Creatures that should be liable to Punishments? In order to this, I say, it will be proper to consider the Definition of Liberty. Thus possibly more than one Pamphlet may be answered at once. B. says, Pag. 10. "Liberty is defined to be a Power of beginning Motion, or a Self-motive Faculty, or a Power of Acting; which Faculty or Power is exerted freely upon the last Judgment of the Understanding." I shall not stay to notice the Force and

and Extent of the Word *freely* here, or if it is consistent with the being necessarily determined by the prepollent Motive, as is said, *Pag.* 16. but observe, that while they have defined Liberty to be a Power of Acting, or beginning Motion, most People have confined *Action* to *Motion*, or the beginning Motion, which is but *one Species* of it; reckoning it only Action, when the Command of the Will was exerted upon the Body in producing some external Act by Motion. * This is not going to the *Fountain-head*, but stopping at the *Stream* issuing from it, and taking that instead of it. The Mind is the active Being, the Principle and Source of Action, and often active by itself, without exerting its Command upon the Body, or producing Motion in it. *Thinking* therefore is Action; and we say with all imaginable Propriety, such an one is busy Thinking, and this generally *most*, when there is least Motion exerted about the Body. What Thinking is I need not describe; every one feels and is conscious of the Thing; and I shall speak of it entirely conform to Experience. Thus every Man will be Judge in this hitherto perplexed Affair.

Since then Thinking is Action, the Power of Thinking on this Thing rather than that, and that rather than this, with much Latitude and Variety, is the Power or Faculty called Liberty, which is *first* and *chiefly* in the Mind, without Respect to Motion. And that the Mind cannot exercise this Power without the last Judgment of the Understanding is a Contradiction;

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* I do not mean here that this Definition is not good, but that most Men only consider *one half* of it. It is in Substance Dr. Clarke's (save what is added about the last Judgment of the Understanding) who says, "It is impossible but there must be in the Universe some Being, whose Existence is founded in the Necessity of its own Nature, and who being acted upon by nothing beyond itself, must of Necessity have in itself a Principle of Acting, or Power of beginning Motion, which is the Idea of Liberty." And this great Man is the best Defender of Liberty.

tradiction; for that is, it could not think till it had deliberated whether it should think or not, which is *already* Thinking. This seems in Part to take off the Impediment, with which they had clogged Liberty. And it is no less a Contradiction, that a Man cannot change the Object of his Thought, dismiss one Idea, and consider another, without calling in the practical Understanding to determine him what to consider, or a moral Motive shewing him that it was preferable to all others; for that would be already to have changed it, in seeking for a Motive to change it. *Hereabouts* (in these two Cases, to wit, of beginning, or changing Thought) they must fix the Origine of their universal moral Necessity, else it will never take Root: And these *Contradictions* occurring will hinder them, I suppose, from *ever* fixing it here. For it is so true, that we do not wait for a moral Motive in the Change of Thought, that a Man will find it a very difficult Thing to keep one solitary Perception in his Mind, for any considerable Time, exclusive of all others. The Mind rather exercises this Power quickly, imperceptibly, arbitrarily. Or let a Man try to keep an *abtruse* Thought (or for Experiment's Sake, any common one) long in View; and then let him honestly say, Whether it be possible for him to change the Object of Thought without a Judgment of the practical Understanding, or a moral Motive to help him to get free of it. We say proverbially, *swift as Thought*. The Truth is, a Man is under a *Necessity* of Thinking, at least as long as he is awake; but *difficulted* to keep any one Thing long in View; and no Matter what relieves him, providing he is relieved. If a Man could *hinder* all Succession of Thought in his Mind, or *moderate* that at Pleasure, it would be in his Power, perhaps, to make Time seem long or short, as he thought fit, with other remarkable Consequences concerning Pleasure and Pain. But, passing these, Experience certainly *shows*, that even here, it is in the Power of the
Mind

Mind to effect a great Variety of Intenseness or Remissness of Thought, by its proper Effort; which could never be without the Power of keeping the Ideas under Consideration a *longer* or *shorter* Time. It is as when a Man looks out at a Window on the Fields, he *must* see something if his Eyes are open, but it would be a Punishment to him to *fix* his Eyes *always* on one Point, though it is arbitrary to him to direct his View longer or shorter while to it. This of arbitrary Shifting and Changing is the Case in remiss and ordinary Thinking, without Study or Intention: Where let the Repugnancy be minded there would be in saying, We could not change the Object of Thought without casting about for a moral Motive to help us to get free of it.

In this Account, for Brevity's Sake, I have designedly omitted to speak of a very ordinary Case, of thinking, to wit, in a Train of Ideas, as they have been *accidentally* related or connected together before, which happens frequently in an indolent and remiss Posture of the Mind: Since *even this* shews its Undeterminedness or Indifferency, when any Relation, how accidental soever, serves to draw its Attention, where neither *moral* or *physical* Necessity can be pretended; and least of all a being determined by the moral Motive *that we think will be most for our Good*, as if the Mind were then in *Concern* about the Pursuit of its Happiness, or *weighing* the Difference of Thoughts. And though this Case is not unfrequent, yet it is *rare*, in Respect of the arbitrary Command of the Mind spoke of before, where no Relation of any Kind can be assigned for the Transition. And *they* who urge this Case for moral Motives and moral Necessity, *cannot*, I think, consistently contend for them in a *quite contrary* Case. The Difference defeats their Argument, unless this were the universal Way of Transition from Idea to Idea. Suppose but three technical Words, as *Barocco*, *Comestres*, *Ferino* (for Instance) were proposed

posed to be repeated incessantly only for a Minute, with what Variety, Change, or *redoubling of the same* one pleased: What Necessity either moral or physical could be pretended for the Transpositions, Mutations, or redoubling of the same, *more or fewer* Times, a Man might fall upon in that Space? Or what Relation for the Transition from this to that, or that to this? And one might repeat a Word of three Syllables, I suppose, 120 Times distinctly in a Minute. Other more advantageous Suppositions might be made. Or behoved a *second* Trial to be in *all* Particulars the *same* with the first, as it should, if either Necessity obtained? All the Determinations must be *unerring*, otherwise the Necessity evanishes; and if they are unerring, all Trials must go on alike without Variation, like a Train of Gun powder. And this is applicable to innumerable other Instances in Life: A Boy could never repeat *wrong*, or never repeat *right* a Piece of *Virgil* or *Homer*.

The Motion of any other Part of the Body (to speak of Motion next) is not much different from *that* of the Eyes in the Example just now adduced, or of the Tongue in this ludicrous Trial; performed by an Act of the Will namely, and often without a practical Decision of the Understanding: For the Motion of the Eyes is Motion, and the Motion of some Part of the Body, and performed by an Act of the Will; and if it may be performed arbitrarily, *so may that* of the Finger, or Hand, or Foot. And to say that one could not turn his Eye from a Point, or that it was necessarily fix'd to that Point, till he had consulted how and where to carry it next, would be speaking against common Sense, tho' their Principles *oblige* them *formally* to maintain this. There is such an Arbitrariness in this, as there is in Thought itself. It is but in some few Cases, where Things of Weight are to follow, that we deliberate and reason about changing the Object of our Thought, or the Posture and Situation of the Parts of our Body;

Body ; as when we *purpose* to consider *such* a Subject, or do *such* an Action. In other Cases much of this is done extemporarily, undesigningly, and without Necessity of any Sort. Consider a Child of five or six Years of Age, and bid him think close on one Thing, or sit in one Posture, *till* he has found out a Reason for Changing : Indeed the first would be an Impossibility, and the last a Torture to him. I wonder that those Philosophers, who have contrived this Chain of Moral-motive Necessity, have never considered the Appearances about *that Age*, where there are arbitrary, unconnected, undesigning Actions and Motions in Abundance. I think they might as well have said, that a young Puppy sporting itself in the Room, or Lambs skipping about upon a Hillock, exerted all their Motions from moral Motives, as one about this Age. And yet who sees not that if Motions are *necessarily* exerted from moral Motives, it must be *universally* ? *

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* There is *another* Universality to be considered here. If this moral Necessity obtains, it must be not only with Respect to the Action itself, but also to the *Time*, *Place*, *Manner*, and *Degree* of it, which I suppose has not yet been noticed : For if there is not a moral Motive for *every* Thing of this Kind, some Circumstance will be left arbitrary, and therefore indifferent, to the *ruining* of the whole Scheme. The Time then must be necessary, and determined to a Minute; let this be considered with Relation to all Kinds of Actions ; the same is to be said of the Place, Degree, Manner, which must all be limited with infinite Minuteness. Imagine one was to strike the Arch of a Circle, to shew something in Geometry : Here there is a moral Motive. But whether shall the Compasses be opened to Half an Inch Radius, or to 3 4ths, 7 8ths, &c. of an Inch ? The Arch be 20, 25, 30, &c. Degrees ? And to be sure there is a moral Motive confining the Center to one individual Point. Who is not aware already of the *endless Perplexities* of that will arise to the Authors from these Things ? Their moral Motives therefore, like Time, Space, Manner, must be *infinitely divisible* Things. If one should say, where moral Necessity ends, physical Necessity takes Place, he would ruin both Kinds of Necessity at once, by making a *Mixture* of *opposite* Things. The Universality of both is broke, or denied, which is enough. If there were a physical Necessity for the Radius being one half of an Inch, it would not be in his Power to make it more or less. If there were a moral Necessity of making

This is the Liberty of Indifference, or conversant about indifferent Things; which, as it appears to me, is the Ground and Foundation of Action by Motive, or after the Judgment of the practical Understanding: For if in *every Thing* the Mind were led by a Motive, there would be either no need, or no room for consulting; that is, if in every Thing the Mind were led by Determination, there would be no room for seeking a *final Determination*, more than there would be of a Man's seeking the right Way, if it were impossible for him to get out of it.

From these we may rise to more complex and intricate Cases, both of Thought and Motion, where the Mind institutes an internal Consultation and Debate, before it determines in great and important Matters. In this Case the Mind, (because it has the Liberty of Indifference, and is not tied by *uninterrupted Determination*) considers the several Things in Competition, *less* or *more*, very freely; the Reasons for and against; compares and weighs; and at length forms a Resolution, according to the Prepollency of the Motive, and thence proceeds to Action. In this Process, it may do *more* or *less*, as I said; examine Things narrowly, or pass them over superficially, because of its Liberty and Indifference. If it were filled with the Appearances of the first Thing, it could never keep an Ear in Reserve for the second; as *Alexander* is said to have done in Favours
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it 0.51023417906 Parts of an Inch, *v. gr.* he could never comply with it, nor be ignorant of the moral Motive either, unless Men act from moral Motives that they knew nothing of; [which Thought deserves a particular Consideration; for this Contradiction must be often true; if in every Thing, and *universally*, the Mind were thus determined] Nor let these Gentlemen think these Suppositions fanciful: They ruin their Scheme effectually, and *both* Schemes, I presume, at the *same* Time. There must be either a moral Motive, or a fatal Necessity, for the Length expressed by this Number, or any other that can be assigned: Or else the Length must be *arbitrary*, as I contend.

of an absent Person accused. And it may proceed to Action, tho' it should find no Prepollency of Motive: For the having instituted an Examination doth not take away the Power which it had before, by what was said just now, of determining and acting in Cases indifferent. Now in all this, it is certain there is a great Deal of *Transition* from Thought to Thought, without moral Motives, by the bare Power and Command of the Will. For deliberating is not made up of infinitely little Deliberations, so that we must deliberate whether we shall think on every little transient Thought or not: Then every Deliberation should want itself a previous Deliberation, whether it should be instituted; and the Progression should be infinite, and thinking an Impossibility. Or thus, if every Change of Perception wanted a moral Motive before it could be made, that moral Motive itself, being a Change of Perception, should want a previous one; and so *in infinitum*; or, as before, all Change of Perception would be impossible. This is the Consequence, if we suppose the moral Motive to be sought for *from within*, and pursued by the Mind itself: And if we say it is *offered from without*, so that the Mind cannot make a Transition from Idea to Idea, till the Motive is first presented, and as it were held before it by something else, we saw above what Result it would turn to. In short, this Transition from Idea to Idea in the Mind is the first Spring of Liberty, and hath never before, as I know, been attended to. Or at least, it is the *first Exercise* of our Liberty, where the Instance is so simple and uncompounded, that the Advocates for Necessity can find no Room or Pretence, without running themselves into Contradiction and Absurdity. And here again in this second Supposition, let it be considered, if *all* Change of Perception is an Impossibility upon it, whether it was *possible* in the Nature of Things, that God could have made rational Beings, such as we Men are, *other* than free
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Beings,

Beings, or endued with the spontaneous Power of Thought, in Opposition to the Being determined in the Transitions of Perception, by Necessity of any Sort.

From what is said, it is *still farther* manifest, that the Power of acting in Cases indifferent, is absolutely necessary, or as I said, the Ground-work and Foundation of acting by Motive and Election. Unless the Mind were free to turn the View here and there, in the first Supposition, it would be led on by one uninterrupted, inevitable Chain of stupid, mechanical, passive Perception: And in the second, it could never have but *one individual Idea constantly* in View, from the Beginning to the End of its Existence. And in both Cases, it would be as *inert a Thing* as Matter, with the Addition only of a passive Perceptivity, or Sense. Those Gentlemen had taken the very last Result and Effect of the Liberty of the Mind, *Determination* to wit, and extended it *backward* over all the Actions leading to it, to the destroying Liberty, and enslaving the rational Soul: Or the *Effect* is made to destroy its *own Cause*. If all were *Determination* there could be no *Deliberation*.

The Fault in this internal consulting rather is, that the Mind makes the Transition of Thought too quick, without examining duely every Particular as we deliberate; and it requires Practice and Attention to prevent this Abuse of the Power of Liberty: For we early contract Habits of *rambling* in Thought. So arbitrary is the Mind! Nor are there many, I presume, whose Experience doth not confirm what I say. Undoubtedly such a Difference of *cool* and *precipitate*, or getting a Habit to *either* Side, would not be, if we were either determined by moral Motives, or carried on by physical Necessity: Moral Motives would always equally *draw*, or physical Necessity equal *drive* us on. Every Symptome here is against Necessity of any Denomination. Or our Fault is,
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that we break off our Deliberations *immaturely*, which it is still in our Power to do, as to make any other Transition. And after all, if we can find no Prepollency to any two Things proposed rather than the other, we can still act under that Indifference, by the Power of the Will, as much as we can act in the Cases first spoken of, where there was no Enquiry instituted; though the Possibility of this is absolutely denied by those who would have us under Necessity of one Kind or other: For, as was said, the having made an Enquiry doth not take away the Power of acting in indifferent Things, which we had before we began to enquire. Either we had no such Power *then*, or we have not lost it *now*. And this is that formal Abuse of Liberty from which all the *Ills* in the World have proceeded, of which more in a little.

If these few plain Observations, drawn, I think, from common Experience, had been adverted to by Mr. *L—z*, Mr. *C—ns*, and others of that Way, or by those who pretend to admire them, (nine in ten perhaps of *young polite* Readers,) I humbly conceive much needless Debate and Writing, concerning Liberty and Necessity, might have been saved. In difficult Enquiries, when we begin with the most *complicated* Cases, we *raise Dust*, and make Things darker, instead of *bringing Light* to them: But beginning with the *simple* and elementary Circumstances, we rise with more Ease and Certainty to the Discussion of *intricate* Points.



Difficulties in Natural Religion answered from the former Account of Liberty.

FROM this Account of Liberty, I believe we may answer most of those Difficulties in Natural Religion, which are the Occasion of such Productions as this: And the Writer has brought them together, as the *Foundation* of his Performance, or as if they had *forced* him on this Singularity of Opinion. Not that there is any *real* Ground to quarrel the Reasonableness of Rewards and Punishments, or of God's Procedure with us: All sober and fair Men find Reason enough to *justify* the Methods of Providence, and to *humble* themselves before God, under a due Sense of their Unworthiness, Faults and Prevarications; only stout Disputants scorn to be in the wrong, and will needs *vindicate* themselves by the *Force* of their own Reason. *Surely* they must think their Maker a very *foolish* Being, who gave *them* a Reason superior to his *own*, so as that they might discover a Want of it in him! The next Step to this is to discard him for good and all, and adopt *Chance* for their Creator. Thus they pretend Necessity,—they were made what they are,—God is good and cannot punish,—otherwise they must be *excused* to tell him, he is a capricious, tyrannical, arbitrary Being.

The first Difficulty is, how Sin or moral Evil came into the World? Though this is of long Standing, I cannot help thinking it is an *affected* Doubt.

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If Men had observed Sin among the Species of created Things, *growing* (if I may so say) like a Plant ; or *moving* like an Animal ; or *inherent* as an essential Property, which if you take away, you destroy the Nature of the Substance it belongs to ; the Doubt had been pertinent : But when they saw *themselves* and *others* produce *this Thing* daily, seeking often with conscious Guilt to conceal it, the Question becomes *strange*, and savours much of the sceptical Spirit. But to give a direct Answer ; From what was last said it is plain, that we may chuse amiss, by immature Deliberation, breaking off our Enquiry too soon, leaning with Partiality to a favorite Side against our Reason, or other unfair Proceeding ; and by doing what was in our Power to have *shunned*, and what we were conscious was *wrong*, we act against the *Law* of our Nature as reasonable Beings, against our *Duty* as Dependents, and introduce Sin and Disobedience into the World. It hath been shown that the Mind hath the Power of Transition in Thought, without being determined by moral Motives ; that the Power of Election or Choice, or acting by Motives, supposes this as the Foundation of it, or that which makes it possible ; and that it is not conceivable in the Nature of Things, that God could make thinking Beings, as we Men are, without this Power ; because to alledge a Motive for every Transition of Thought, if the Motive is offered from without, is to make us perceive mechanically, like the Looking-glass I mentioned ; And that the Mind should cast about itself for the Motive of Transition of Thought, is a Contradiction, that being to have made the Transition already. *Thus* let Men come out of the Hands of their Creator as perfect as it was possible, *still* it was impossible for them to have come out, *without* this Power, if they were to be thinking and rational Beings. And this, I humbly think, is a *formal Answer* to the great sceptical Question, How came God to creat Men so as to be *capable* of Sin,
or

or *liable* to Punishment? I am aware that it implies no Repugnancy, that there should be superior Orders of Beings with intuitive or undiscursive Knowledge; or rather this is infinitely probable, and agreeable to the Variety and Gradation of the Works of God: But I contend that in Creatures who attain Knowledge by Deduction, *Things must be* as I here represent them. And I farther contend, that Man hath no Reason to quarrel with God that he was not made one of those superior Orders; since, as he was made, he still *had Power* to answer all the Ends of his Creation, and attain Happiness as much as his Nature was capable of. The same Variety or Gradation would not allow that all Animals should be *Elephants*, or all Plants *Cedars*. Besides it would be difficult, I think, if not Rashness, to pretend to prove that these Beings never act in Cases of Indifference: And this the more, since Dr. *Clark* has shown, that the Deity himself operates in such Cases, and hath instanced (besides the Point in debate betwixt him and Mr. *Leibnitz*) in *Juxta Positing*, the perfectly solid Parts of Matter to each other, which must be perfectly alike. And certainly many Particulars could be assigned, in which the Nature of the Thing does not allow of a moral Motive. And lastly, in the very highest Orders of these Beings (since they have not an infinite Comprehension of all Things at once) the Transition from Thought to Thought must be without a Determination from moral Motives. The Reasons above assigned are universal; the Contradiction in the one Case (applicable here), and the mechanical passive Perception in the other. When it is considered, I suppose it will be found that there is no Being besides the Deity with a perfectly *undiscursive* or *simultaneous* Knowledge; and undoubtedly he determines and acts in numberless Circumstances of perfect Indifference in the material Universe, where,

as I said, the Nature of the Thing does not admit of moral Motives, as perhaps in another Place will be shown. To return.

Here we may observe the Falaciousness of the only specious Argument of the Adversaries of Liberty, which they repeat, and give us upon all Occasions, concerning our yeilding *always*, and *necessarily* to the Solicitations of the stronger Motive, which they pretend is enough to *exculpate* us, whatever we do. But contrarily, since the Mind, by what is said, doth not find itself *impotent* to act, or which is the same Thing, not impeded to produce the Action, till it hath fully considered the Prepollency and Reasonableness of the Motive ; it may thus proceed to act, no other Way than it *precipitates* any other Transition. [Here in passing, I beg one to consider what it would import, if this Freedom of the Soul were *impeded*, or *suspended*, as often as it were going to *abuse* it, or *act rashly* ; of which something farther on.] And as was said in a like Case above, if it may act once without considering, and in one Case, it may in another, and that for a second Time, and a Third : In a Word, it may contract a Habit of not considering, and of Actions so performed. For repeated Acts of any Kind become a Habit : And if it may contract one Habit, it may another ; and then indeed the *Bypass* is to the *wrong Side*. Habits will be instead of Motives, and the Motives will come to *fight* among themselves ; and the Pleasure of indulging the contracted Habit, will be a Persuasive sooner listened to, than the Reason against continuing it. And *thus at length*, by the Abuse of our Liberty, we bring ourselves under a *Necessity* and *Slavery of our own procuring* ; and those Gentlemen laying hold of Things when they come this Length, pretend that we always, and necessarily yeild to the Solicitations of the strongest Motive, and that the Mind has no Power to act of itself, but as it is led. In this consists the Fallacy of their
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Procedure. We should consider Appearances, ere they come to this *Entanglement*, in their elementary Circumstances, as was said. When a Man hath brought himself under the Dominion of any *Intemperance*, be what it will, and hath disaccustomed himself to reason or deliberate in the Case, Things are no longer *intire*; he is no doubt under a Necessity [of Habit] and yeilds to the stronger Solicitation: But he himself hath *increased* the Strength of that Side, and *weakened* the Force of the other, and is no more excuseable than a Man would be, who should willingly disable himself from working, out of a View to be maintained on Charity.

And here again I appeal to common Experience, whether from the first Transition of Thought from Idea to Idea, and in all the Steps upward, a Man is not conscious to himself of having abused his Liberty, in the Manner, or *very near* in the Manner, as I have represented. Indeed he only who can say he acted always on the best Motives he *could discover* (Pag. 15.) who never did a Thing that his Reason told him was *wrong*, has a Right to ask how Sin came into the World. In all others it is a disingenuous Question. Let me observe that all the moral Duties are so evidently seen, that no Person of common Sense can be ignorant of them: We find them owned, nay defended by all. Every Man would be against that Person who should maintain that to steal, oppress, perjure, murder, were Actions in their own Nature as good as their Opposites. Surely the *Secresie* and *Concealment* with which these Things are perpetrated, betrays a *Consciousness* and *Guilt*. How happy therefore would it have been for the World, if but a *few* only could have said from their own Experience, they had a Notion how Sin might have come into the World! It is the better for the Gentlemen on the other Side, that they are *ignorant* of this undesireable Peice of Knowledge. But farther, this perfect Man, who *never did* an Action contrary

to his Reason, must go a greater Length, and say it was *impossible* for him to have designed it; otherwise he will still have a Notion of the Possibility at least, how Sin might have come into the World. And this was enough to prevent his making a Question of, or doubting about it: For the Possibility of it in himself, with all his *Innocence* and *Perfection* about him, will shew him the *Possibility* how it might have been *first* introduced, which is the chief Point pretended not to be understood.

From what was said just now concerning contracting vicious Habits, by a gradual Abuse of the Liberty of Indifference, we may answer another Difficulty, or sceptical Defence, *viz.* That we are made what we are, and received all our Faculties from the Being that created us; Therefore either we cannot be guilty of Sin; or, if we are, he is accountable. "The Creature (says this Writer, *Pag.* 14.) does not, you know, give itself any Faculties, or Inclinations; but all is given it by the Creator; who, as he is perfectly good, could not have given it any ill ones; and besides his creating all with certain Inclinations and Dispositions, he orders all their external Circumstances as he sees best, &c." Whence he infers we cannot be guilty of any Thing Evil or Wicked. But contrarily, we see from what is said, that we may corrupt those Faculties given us by the Creator *originally* good; and contract Inclinations in Abundance, which he neither gave nor designed. There is no Distinction here made between *Faculties* and *Inclinations*, though they are widely different: And because we cannot give ourselves any new *Powers* of Action, it is inferred we cannot contract false Appetites and vicious Inclinations. As to the *first*, consider the Man, who by constant Debauches vitiates his Memory, stupifies the Activity and Vigour of his Mind, and ruins a healthy Constitution. He is no more like what he was, than an *Infirmity* is like an *Academy*. As to *Inclinations*,

to give one of the lowest Instances, would it not be ridiculous to say, we got the Inclinations to *Szuff* and *Brandy* from the Creator, which cost us so many Qualms before we can acquire them? A Habit contracted unnaturally enough, will at length come to have a regular *Call* upon us, like a second Nature. Is it fair to insinuate that God created us with this Inclination, though it hath a very importunate Solicitation? Or can this be the Foundation of Impunity and Unaccountableness? As to what is said concerning God's ordering all our external Circumstances, as he sees best, so that nothing can come to pass but what he designed, which is another Way of *shifting over* the Blame upon the Deity; it is to be minded, that though God would impede the external Action which is wickedly designed, he *cannot* impede the wicked Design itself, which is already the Wickedness and Obliquity from the Rule of Action, *without depriving us* of that Liberty of thinking which I have shewn to be *essential* to *Election* in general, to our good as well as bad Designs. This would be to desire him to unmake us, because we have not a mind to act rationally. And if God interposed extraordinarily to impede the external Action, there would be no settled Course in Nature. Or is it reasonable to desire God to disturb the Law of Creation, and the Government of the Universe, rather than that we should do what is in our Power to do, and not abuse a Faculty given us for the best Purposes, and which in Effect raises us above the Brutes? A strange Demand! All such *Suspendings* and *Interruptions* would be inconsistent with a *State of Probation*, which I humbly think, by this Time, does not want to be proved. But it will be said, *What?* Doth not God then order every Thing as he sees best? I answer, *Most undoubtedly*: But this without impeding the Actions of Free Beings; and adds, (which is a higher Pitch than they imagined) will, notwithstanding of these, bring all to a *beautiful and wise*

wise Issue. We are not able to *perplex* the Affairs of the moral World, beyond his Power to *redress* them; but are not blameless, because an infinitely perfect Being doth not suffer Disorder to get the Upper-hand.

From the above Account of Liberty we may answer another sceptical Refuge, *viz.* That the Foreknowledge of the Deity is the *Cause* why the Thing fore-known comes to pass as is here asserted (P. 14) and *generally* insinuated as an Apology for all our Faults. For since the Soul is shown to have a self-determining Power, which appears chiefly and most clearly in determining where the Things are indifferent; it follows plainly that Prescience is not the Cause of the Action either moral or physical. If the Soul has any Activity at all, is any Thing beyond a Name, it is the physical Cause of this Determination: And since moral Motives are not adhibited, it is needless to seek for another moral Cause. Because in these indifferent Things the Determination is made, and the Action exerted by the native Power of the Soul itself, *therefore* it is that the Contenders for Necessity are so studious to *deny*, or *disguise* and conceal this Cause. And since this is so in Cases of Indifference, it is also true in Cases of a *Prepollency of Motive*: For *that* only adds a new Modification to the Determination, and it is still the Soul that determines upon the Occasion of this Prepollency: Or rather determines *first* the Prepollency itself, *and that* *often wrong*, so much doth its Power appear, (which I would have well noticed); and *then* determines the Action according to that.

After this, one cannot well help noticing the Notion, that the divine Prescience may be explained; that it is *built* upon moral Necessity, or acting from the prepollent Motive; and that, if the Actions of moral Agents came not to pass *according* to the divine Decrees, there would be no Foundation for Prescience.

science. (see Page 13.) Here, in this last Way of expressing it, the Fore-knowledge itself is founded on the Decrees, which are at the Bottom of all; and thus all our Actions are refunded into absolutely Necessity: And these strange Things, *moral Motives*, are but the *Wires* and *Springs* of irresistible Fate; and when they are prepollent to Murder, Perjury, &c. God presents them! This is *modern* moral Necessity! Thus we have the divine Prescience explained; as also how it is the Cause of our Actions! — But taking it in the first Way, *viz.* that it is *built* upon our acting constantly according to the prepollent Motive; what if this is false, as I presume I have shewn it is? What if we act often in Cases of Indifference, where there are no Motives; or without considering them where they are; or where, when considered, they appear equipollent to us? — Must we deny the Divine Prescience then? — Is it right for us to pretend to explain it, or comprehend the formal Manner of it? Or to deny it, if we cannot give a Cause and Reason for it? — Besides, how doth this take away the Difficulty? This Preference is the Cause of his knowing the subsequent Action; but what is the Cause of his Fore-knowing this *antecedent* Preference? When we act in Cases of Indifference, suppose? In Disturbance and Confusion? absurdly and rashly? What becomes of the Prepollency that should guide, and, if I may so say, *illuminate*, the divine Prescience? Were it not better, not to pretend to investigate the Reason of God's Fore-knowledge; and yet to confess the Thing, because it is an undeniable Perfection? Or why should we pretend more to give a Reason for this, than for the *Omnipotence* of God? Is God less Almighty, because we cannot tell the Reason why, or the formal Manner how he is Almighty? Is there nothing in God but what proceeds from a Cause, and *may be explained*? That is against his uncaused Nature. — Let it be permitted to make a short Observation. If once we

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suppose the divine Attributes may be thus explained, the next Step is to deny them: For we will *reject* what we cannot *explain*. As certain as it is that the Existence of a Being of infinite Perfections is clearly demonstrable; so certain is it, from the Nature of the Thing, that his infinite Perfections are to us inexplicable, and the formal Manner of them incomprehensible to finite Minds. A Truth which I wish were well minded in natural Theology. Dr. *Clark*, from whom perhaps an Authority may be pretended for this Attempt of explaining the Prescience, by no Means countenances it. He says,—“ ’Tis true, the Manner how God can foresee future Things, without a Chain of necessary Causes, is impossible for us to explain distinctly; tho’ some Sort of general Notion we may conceive of it. For as a Man who has no Influence on another Person’s Actions, &c.” And a little below, “ The distinct Manner how he foresees these Things, is indeed impossible for us to explain, but so are also numberless other Things, which yet no Man doubts of the Truth of it.”

With respect to this *Foundation* on which the Prescience can only be *built*, it is remarkable enough that the Writer seems to contradict himself, and at once his whole Scheme. Speaking of Things indifferent, or perfectly alike, he says, we are as necessarily indifferent which to take; and adds,—“ In common Affairs, we say there is no Choice among such Things, I will take the next to my Hand.” (*Page 16.*) From this it will follow, that God doth not, nor cannot fore-know how we will act in such indifferent Circumstances, since chusing from a Prepollency is made the Reason why he fore-knows any Thing: So that this Way of accounting for the divine Prescience in Effect destroys it, and the whole Scheme, as I said. According to it, the Soul in an Equipollency of Motive should be unable to act at all, the equal Balance keeping her in perfect Suspence, like the As-

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between the two Bundles of Hay we are told of, or the Needle between two equal Loadstones. And yet, if in common Life we may put to our Hand, and take what comes next, either in indifferent Things, or without considering the Difference; which certainly we may do, and *actually* do, as in *drawing Lots, &c*; the Soul has the Power they deny her. Upon this Concession one might argue all along, without being at the Trouble to prove any Thing, and answer all these sceptrical Difficulties.

Another Objection against Punishment is, That a Being infinitely happy in himself could have *no other* End in creating us, but to communicate to us *all* the Happiness our Nature is *capable* of (Pag. 7.) This sounds strong; the Sceptick supposes he has carried his Point by Force of Argument; and even the sober Part of Mankind are stumbled. In short the Proposition in itself is *true*; but *misunderstood*, I presume, in the Application. To argue in a familiar, common Way; If a great Man called up an inferior Person, with a Design to raise and advance him; and if this Person, instead of acting agreeably to such Kindness of Intention, should begin to pilfer, oppress, set the Domesticks at Variance, and under-hand sow *disadvantageous* Surmises of his Benefactor; would he have any good Grace to stand on his Justification, and talk of *Caprice* and *Tyranny*, if the Prince sent him off with Marks of his Anger? Those Gentlemen will observe at their Leisure, whether the Application here is pertinent: Only let them not reply, that we should not have had it in our Power *not* to correspond to the kind Intentions of a Benefactor; since I have shewn that without this Liberty, we could not have been rational and thinking Creatures. Is it not enough that *we have it in our Power* to correspond? Or should we have been of a Nature to be wrought like Machines; or have had *inconsistent* Hap-

Happiness forced upon us? There is something mean and degenerate, nay wretched and base in this Thought, *To shew our selves so covetous of Pleasure, and so regardless of Reason.*—"A good God could have had no other End in creating us, but to give us all the Happiness our Nature is capable of." Let me ask what the Meaning of this is? Is it that, Let us work all the Wickedness we can, and live as regardless of Reason as we list, God should yet make us as happy and blessed, as Creatures that had acted quite contrarily, behaving as rational Beings, and Dependents? This is too bare-faced a Meaning to be owned: And yet, if it is not owned, there is neither Room for Objection nor Complaint. This is a pretty severe *Dilemma*, one would think; for really if they do not stand by this contradictory Absurdity, they justify the Thing they complain of, and own that in Reason a contrary Method should be pursued.—Upon fair Enquiry it will be found, that the Happiness of an After state can only consist in rational and intellectual Enjoyments. Did they suppose they were Pleasures of any other Kind? And do not those who act against Reason, live repugnant to the Law of their Nature; unfit their Nature for that Pleasure? May we not as well say, *God is an arbitrary, capricious God*, who would not, for our Sakes, make Health consistent with Debauchery? What? Is Debauchery such a noble Pleasure? Or are they worthy of Health, who want it for this brutal Purpose? Or are we less absurd to quarrel with the Deity, that he did not make an irrational Practice the Way to prepare our Natures for rational Pleasure? Are we not ashamed to own that we are so much in Love with the Appetites of Sense (for all else comes to that) that we find Fault they are not placed among the Gratifications of the rational Nature; as if one refused to be a Man, unless he could be a Swine in Conjunction with that?

I do not see that the present Objection, when taken out of the Ambiguity of Expression, is more decent. All the Pleasure indeed our Nature would be capable of, after a Life thus spent, would be to be continued in an Eternity of *Wallowing*; to have the Irregularities, the Wickedness of this State, prolonged without End. Let these Gentlemen consider of it again, and make their Demands for Happiness more consistent. If it is rational Pleasures they want, the Way to these lies open; they will prevent such Objections; and the Pursuit of them here will be followed with the endless Enjoyment of them in a better State: For thus in right Philosophy *the Relation of Things stretches out into Eternity*.—Moreover we have multiplied Pain and Misery among Men, merely to enhance more of the Pleasures of Sense; for, once more, all terminates in the *Back and Belly*, or what is referable to these, save the Pleasures I contend for: Is a *negative Punishment* proportioned to this Injustice? Not to be so happy, namely, as otherwise we might have been? *Annihilation* is the greatest of all negative Punishments. This cannot answer the *infinite Variety* of Offences. If the highest Offender were to be annihilated, (and some such one or more there must be) must all, save one, have a Degree of positive Felicity, for the Murders, Massacres, Ruins, they have wrought among Men? Reason surely concludes that the Punishments in an After-state must be *positive*. Thus when we consider it more nearly, and a *second Time*, nothing is more *philosophical*, nothing more rational than *Rewards and Punishments*: Nor doth any Thing discover more our Ignorance of what is consistent and beautiful than to deny it. Rewards alone, since an Abuse of Liberty has once ensued, would be against the eternal Reason of Things. God is an infinitely reasonable Being, as well as infinitely happy or good; and *Proportion* is as necessary in his *Actions*, as

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Perfection to his *Nature*. In fine, this Scheme alone can make us as happy as our *Natures* are capable of. They had made up an inconsistent *Chimera* of Happiness in their Minds ; like Men complaining, that indulging *Ignorance* was not the stated Course of Nature to become *learned*.

The last Difficulty I have to notice is, " That Sin " and Wickedness could not have been introduced into the World, contrary to the Design and Intention " of God, who could not have wanted Means to " execute such a good Design, *pag. 8, 10, 12, 18.*" This is founded on the Supposition, That God must have *determined* or *decreed*, that Sin or moral Evil should *not* be introduced into it : But this is the capital Mistake ; for Decrees are not conversant in the *Natures* of Things about the Existence, or Non-existence of Actions that are to be produced by free Agents. In Reason the Order of Things seems to lie thus. If we had not been free, we could not have been rational, nor capable of any moral Happiness. This is the first Step. As we are free, our Actions could not have been predetermined. This is the second. And as we have *abused* that Freedom, Punishment *succeeds*. This is the third. That which was always possible to be, and comes at length to exist, cannot *not be* : Therefore the Consequence of it cannot *not be*. These are plainly the Conditions of a *State of Probation*. And the last Step is, that moral Agents be limited to a certain Time for this, that Wickedness once introduced might not be *continued* and *multiplied in infinitum* ; and that the Happiness of these who chuse well and do their Duty, might not be for ever *incomplete* and *suspended*. This Objection seems rather an *ironical* Way of denying, or doubting that God exists, by supposing he must have done a Thing, which it is certain he hath not done : For all the Rhetorick in the World will never convince any Person who is in his right Sense, that there

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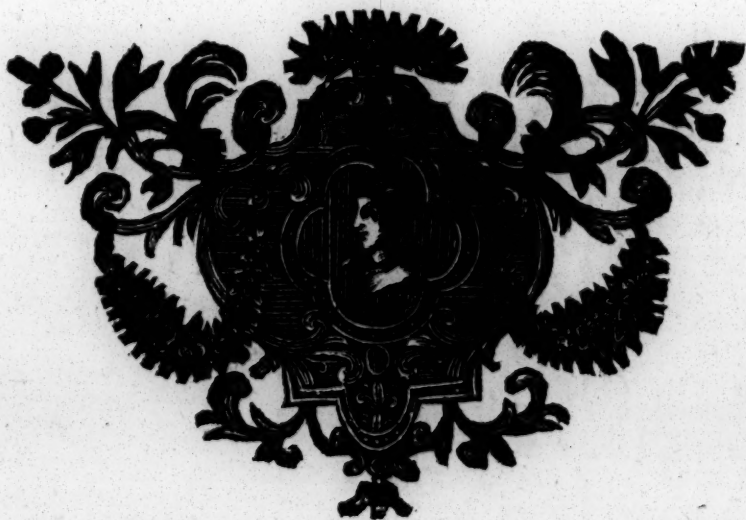
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is no Sin and Wickedness in the Actions of Men. But the Abuse of our Freedom shews us that the Introduction of moral Evil is consistent enough with the infinite Perfections of God, unless we are willing to mistake.

Thus, if I might repeat it again, this single Power of human Liberty, thus made out, would, I humbly think, help us to discover the Mistake in all those sceptical Arguments, brought for Irreligion, which now seem so strong to forward and *seditionous* Reasoners. The Wisdom of the Deity shines out infinitely more thus, than if the Actions of his Creatures were determined both in Kind and Degree. For it shews more Wisdom and *Compass* of Government, so to order the Actions of free Agents, or so to apply them, that, notwithstanding the Perplexities and irregular Things we occasion in the moral World, all will be brought to conspire to an Issue full of Beauty and Agreement, than if the Governor of the World had shewn a *Fearfulness* to let them go too far out of his Power to *reduce*. This, in all Probability, will be the *Theme* of *Admiration* to all the rational Beings of the Universe. And then even his *Goodness* will *thus* be more *pure* and *rational*. It would not be Goodness, but *Partiality* or *Remissness*, a confused *passing* of Things over; if no Distinction were made betwixt such Extremes of Morality and Immorality, as we see in the Lives of Men. If Justice be a Perfection, (and let a Man say it is none) it must be in the universal Governor; and necessarily in the Necessary Being. And if it be; where else can it be used if not here? The Kinds, Degrees, and Proportions of Punishments, suited to the Nature, Circumstances, and Measure of Delinquencies, may well be supposed to exhibit to view a rational, surprising, entertaining Scene. All the Procedure will be justified *first* by the *punished*. God will not be displayed an *almighty Tyrant*, but a Being over all, whose Actions
eternal

eternal Reason presides. *More* or *less* would appear deformed in the Sight of Men and Angels. His Severity will not *cancel* his Mercy and Goodness; nor his Lenity *break in* upon the eternal Proportions of Equity and Justice.—And if any should think this is *declaiming*; let him consider again, whether we can *exaggerate* upon the Subject of *infinite Perfections*, keeping within a Consistency of Ideas.

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